

REMARKS/ARGUMENT

Claims 1-154, 157-161, 164-168, 171, 172, 174-178, 181-185, 188, 189, 191-195, 198-202, 205, 206, 208-212, 215-219, 222-226, 229-233, 236-240, 243, 244, 246-250, 253-257, 260, 261, 263-267, 270-274, 277, 278, 280-284 and 287-291 are now presented for examination. Claims 1-9, 11-154, 157-161, 164-168, 172, 222-226, 229-233, 236-240, 243, 244, 246-250, 253-257, 260, 261, 263-267, 270-274, 277, 278, 280-284 and 287-291 have been amended. Claims 155, 156, 162, 163, 169, 170, 173, 179, 180, 186, 187, 190, 196, 197, 203, 204, 207, 213, 214, 220, 221, 227, 228, 234, 235, 241, 242, 245, 251, 252, 258, 259, 262, 268, 269, 275, 276, 279, 285, 286, 292 and 293 have been cancelled without prejudice. The specification has been amended as to matters of form.

Claims 1, 5, 7 and 150 are the only independent claims.

Initially, Applicant notes that while it appears that the drawings were not objected to, the entry on the Office Action Summary for the drawings is not entirely filled out. The Examiner is requested to indicate in the next Office Action that the drawings as filed are in fact acceptable.

As to the objections to the claims, claim 6 was objected to because of allegedly awkward language. That claim has been amended in substantially the manner suggested by the Examiner, obviating the objection. Claims 21-27 were originally duplicative because of an editorial error. As amended, those claims are no longer believed duplicative. Withdrawal of the objection is requested.

Claims 1, 2, 5, 6, 10-13 and 153, and the claims dependent thereon, were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as indefinite. The cancellation of certain claims listed above renders the rejection of the cancelled claims moot. The claims have been carefully reviewed and amended as deemed necessary to ensure that they conform fully to the requirements of Section 112, second paragraph, with special attention

to the points raised in paragraphs 5-12 of the Office Action.

The issues of antecedent basis have been resolved in most cases by amending the base claim to initially recite the objected-to element. In such cases, it was not always necessary to actually amend the claims specifically referred to in the Section 112, second paragraph rejection in the Office Action. It is believed that the rejection under Section 112, second paragraph, has been obviated, and its withdrawal is therefore respectfully requested.

Claims Claims 1-11, 14-18, 21-27, 150-154, 157-161 and 164-168 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by U.S. Patent 5,835,963 (Yoshioka et al.).

Applicant notes with appreciation the indication of the presence of allowable subject matter in Claims 12, 13, 19, 20, 28-149, 155, 156, 162, 163 and 169-293. As shown above, independent claim 150 has been amended to recite the subject matter of claim 155, indicated as allowable. Claim 155 has been cancelled. In view of the indication of the allowability of claim 155, amended claim 150 is now believed clearly in condition for allowance.

The other independent claims also were amended to recited the patentable feature of now-cancelled claim 155 and are believed allowable for at least the same reasons.

The other claims in this application are each dependent from one or another of the independent claims discussed above and are therefore believed patentable for the same reasons. Since each dependent claim is also deemed to define an additional aspect of the invention, however, the individual reconsideration of the patentability of each on its own merits is respectfully requested.

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(PATENT)

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicant respectfully requests favorable reconsideration and early passage to issue of the present application.

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Respectfully submitted,

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